

NOMURA et al.
Appl. No. 09/892,747
Response to Office Action dated November 16, 2007

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the subject patent application are respectfully requested.

Independent claim 1 has been amended to recite that the user system is one to which one or more expansion units may be attached and that the supplied program is executed on the user system to "confirm proper operation of each expansion unit by the program."

The subject patent application describes by way of example and without limitation a program supply method and system that involve determining an operating environment of a user system (e.g., a configuration of a main system and associated expansion unit(s)), judging whether a program is operable in the operating environment of the user system and, based on the judging, supplying the program to the user system. In certain example embodiments, after receiving confirmation at the server of proper operation of each expansion unit by the program, payment for the program is requested.

For example, when a black-and-white scanner is replaced by a color scanner, a program "ELECTRIC FILE (COLOR READING)" for reading documents in color may be transmitted to the image forming apparatus. After executing the "ELECTRIC FILE (COLOR READING)" program to confirm its proper operation (e.g., to confirm that the color scanner can be properly operated by the program), confirmation of the proper operation is sent to a server. See, e.g., page 17, line 2 to page 18, line 3 of the subject patent application. See also page 30, lines 4-6 ("...a manufacturer can confirm whether the ordered program is operating or not in the user system to complete the transmission.") Thereafter, payment for the program may be requested. See, e.g., page 29, line 11 to page 30, line 15.

The proposed combination of Oki et al. and Nakagawa et al. is deficient with respect to claim 1 for the reasons set forth in Applicant's prior responses, which reasons are incorporated herein in their entirety. Moreover, these documents are also deficient with respect to the recited feature of confirming proper operation of each expansion unit by the supplied program. Consequently, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 and its dependent claims patentably distinguish over the proposed combination of Oki et al. and Nakagawa et al.

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NIXON & VANDERHYE PC Fax: 703-816-4100

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Independent claims 8, 12, 21, 22 and 25 have been amended and variously recite program supply methods and systems in which a program supplied from a server is executed on a user system to thereby confirm proper operation of expansion units by the program and in which payment for the program is requested by a server after the server receives confirmation of proper operation. For reasons similar to those discussed above with respect to claim 1, these claims and the claims that depend therefrom likewise patentably distinguish over the proposed combination of Oki et al. and Nakagawa et al.

Independent claims 23, 24 and 31 have been amended and variously call for executing a program to confirm proper operation of expansion units by the program and transmitting (or sending) a notification regarding the confirmation of operation to a server. As discussed above, this feature is not disclosed by either Oki et al. or Nakagawa et al. and, consequently, the proposed combination of Oki et al. and Nakagawa et al. is deficient at least with respect to this feature of claims 23, 24 and 31 and the claims that depend therefrom.

Independent claim 33 has been amended to recite executing the installed program to confirm proper operation of each expansion unit by the program. As discussed above, this feature is not disclosed or suggested by Oki et al. or Nakagawa et al. Similarly, the Background section of the subject patent application does not contain this concept. Consequently, claim 33 is believed to patentably distinguish over the applied references.

The pending claims are believed to be allowable and favorable office action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

NIXON & VANDERHYE P.C.

By:



Michael J. Shea
Reg. No. 34,725

MJS:mjs
901 North Glebe Road, 11th Floor
Arlington, VA 22203-1808
Telephone: (703) 816-4000
Facsimile: (703) 816-4100